

**BOROUGH OF FARNWORTH**

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**Annual Report**  
OF THE  
**Medical Officer of Health**

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**1949**



## MEMBERS OF THE HEALTH COMMITTEE

Chairman : ALDERMAN DEAN, J.P.

Vice-Chairman : COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS

Members :

The Mayor (Alderman Welsby, J.P.)

Alderman Jones, J.P.

„ Nuttall.

Councillor Armitage.

„ Bradley.

„ Brooks.

„ Geere.

„ Thorp.

„ Wilson.

Alderman Holland.
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Died 21/9/1949.
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## STAFF OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

Medical Officer of Health :

R. SYDNEY DAVIDSON, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H.

Senior Sanitary Inspector :

A. H. S. LEWIS, Cert. R.S.I. & S.I.E., Jt. Board R.S.I.,

Food Inspection.

Sanitary Inspector :

A. LIVESEY, Cert. R.S.I. & S.I.E. Jt. Board, R.S.I.,

Food Inspection. (Commenced duties 2/5/49).

Clerks :

Miss M. M. Helme (part-time).

Miss S. Hampson (part-time).

**TO THE MAYOR, ALDERMEN AND MEMBERS OF  
THE COUNCIL.**

Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen.

I have the honour to submit the Annual Report on the health of the Borough for the year 1949.

The incidence of infectious disease grows less every year and there is again no case of diphtheria in the Borough to record.

An outbreak of food poisoning, due to the use of duck eggs in the preparation of food which was not subject to a boiling point heat, resulted in one death among some 55 cases. The outbreak is of interest in that the particular food causing the infection was found within an hour of investigations commencing, and that the cases of food poisoning were only notified to the Health Department after a circular letter asking for notifications had been sent out to the general practitioners of the district. This outbreak would not have come to the notice of the Health Department had not the hospital pathologist thought fit to send a copy to me of the bacteriological report on the faeces of a Farnworth patient.

This Annual Report, which is mainly statistical, cannot convey the amount of work done in the Borough in housing inspection and repairs and also the sanitary control of milk and foodstuffs and the premises from which they are sold.

There is still much to be done in the provision of better housing conditions in the town, but it should be borne in mind that the standard of housing in Farnworth is superior to most industrial towns of comparable size and population.

Slum dwellings are non-existent in Farnworth, but this fact should not deter the council nor the Health Department in endeavouring to attain still better housing conditions.

I am deeply conscious and grateful for the help and encouragement I have always received from the Chairman, members of the Health Committee and the staff of the department.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

R. SYDNEY DAVIDSON,

Medical Officer of Health.

# STATISTICS OF THE AREA.

Area = 1504 statute acres.

Population	...	28,320	...	...	Estimated mid-1949.
		28,717	...	...	1931 Census.
Number of inhabited houses, 1931	...	...	...	...	7,104
Number of inhabited houses, 1949	...	...	...	...	8,698
Rateable Value (1st April, 1949)	...	...	...	...	£144,225
Sum represented by 1d. rate	...	...	...	...	£571

## Vital Statistics for the year 1949.

### BIRTHS.

				Males	Females	Total
Legitimate	...	...	...	256	219	475
Illegitimate	...	...	...	8	8	16
Total Births				264	227	491
Still Births	...	...	...	4	9	13

	Farnworth	England & Wales
Birth-rate per 1,000 population	17·3	16·7
Still Births per 1,000 total births	26	—
Still Births per 1,000 population	0·45	0·39

				Males	Females	Total
Deaths of infants under 1 year :						
Legitimate	...	...	...	10	6	16
Illegitimate	...	...	...	—	2	2
Total				10	8	18

	Farnworth	England & Wales		
Infant Mortality Rate	37 per 1,000	32 per 1,000		
Deaths from whooping cough	...	...	...	1
Premature birth	...	...	...	5

### Death rate per 1,000 population—

Farnworth	...	...	...	12·9
England and Wales	...	...	...	11·7

### Causes of Death in all Ages in 1949.

Cerebral spinal fever ... ..	1
Whooping cough ... ..	1
Pulmonary tuberculosis ... ..	7
Syphilitic diseases ... ..	1
Influenza ... ..	6
Acute infective encephalitis ... ..	2
Cancer ... ..	45
Diabetes... ..	5
Intra-cranial vascular lesions ... ..	36
Heart diseases ... ..	116
Other circulatory diseases ... ..	13
Bronchitis ... ..	35
Pneumonia ... ..	14
Other respiratory diseases ... ..	3
Ulcer of stomach or duodenum ... ..	2
Diarrhoea (under 2 years) ... ..	1
Appendicitis ... ..	2
Other digestive diseases ... ..	7
Nephritis ... ..	17
Maternal causes ... ..	1
Premature birth ... ..	5
Congenital defects ... ..	5
Suicide ... ..	3
Road traffic accidents ... ..	4
Other deaths from violence ... ..	9
All other causes ... ..	23
<b>Total ... ..</b>	<b>364</b>

### PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

#### DIPHTHERIA.

There were no cases of diphtheria during the year.

#### DIPHTHERIA ANTI-TOXIN.

Anti-toxin is available in 10,000 units free to general practitioners for patients resident in the Borough. During the year 30,000 units were issued.

#### SCARLET FEVER.

Out of 59 cases of scarlet fever notified during the year, 22 were treated in hospital. There were no deaths due to this disease.

#### PNEUMONIA.

There were 23 cases notified and there were 14 deaths.

#### PUERPERAL PYREXIA.

There were no cases notified during the year.

#### OPHTHALMIA NEONATORUM.

There were no cases notified during the year.

## INFECTIOUS DISEASES, 1949.

Scarlet fever ... ..	59
Paratyphoid fever ... ..	3
Measles (excluding rubella)...	81
Whooping cough ... ..	134
Acute pneumonia (primary and influenzal)	23
Acute poliomyelitis ... ..	1
Erysipelas ... ..	6
Food poisoning ... ..	56
Treated in hospital :—	
Scarlet fever ... ..	22
Paratyphoid fever ... ..	3
Measles ... ..	1
Whooping cough ... ..	1
Pneumonia ... ..	3
Acute poliomyelitis ... ..	1
Erysipelas ... ..	4
Food poisoning ... ..	2

## TUBERCULOSIS.

Cases notified :—

Pulmonary ... ..	26
Non-pulmonary ... ..	6

The treatment of tuberculosis is undertaken by the County Council.

## FOOD POISONING.

There were two outbreaks of food poisoning in the Borough during the year.

The first outbreak was due to an infection by *B. Typhi Murium* and was conveyed by custard filling of vanilla slices sold by a confectioner. The source of infection was ultimately traced to duck eggs used in making the custard filling.

There were 44 cases notified as a result of this infection and about 11 known cases which were not notified. There was one fatal case in a woman aged 57.

This outbreak was recorded in detail in the *Medical Officer* dated 15th October, 1949.

It is interesting to record that, in this outbreak, no case of food poisoning was notified to this Health Department on the initiative of any general practitioner. A local hospital favoured us with the copy of a bacteriological report showing the presence of *B. typhi murium* in the faeces of a patient admitted two days before.

The Senior Sanitary Inspector made investigations forthwith and within one hour the custard filling of the vanilla slice was suspect. This was Thursday and these vanilla slices had

been on sale the previous Friday and Saturday. It was obvious that there must be many people in the district suffering from food poisoning as a result of eating these vanilla slices and a circular letter was sent to every general practitioner in the area asking for notifications as a result of which 44 cases were notified.

It is evident that but for the copy of the bacteriological report, which the hospital was in no way obliged to forward to this department, the epidemic of food poisoning would have been unknown to the Health Department.

It was due to the prominence this case received in the local press that a second minor outbreak of food poisoning was also discovered.

The food responsible was cooked veal infected with the *Staphylococcus Aureus*. The source of infection was suspected in a cut finger of one of the shop assistants but bacteriological proof was not obtained. There were 12 cases of a mild type, with the typical sudden onset. There were no fatalities.

## SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

### WATER SUPPLY.

The town is supplied with water by Bolton Corporation. The water is derived from upland gathering grounds and is filtered and treated before going into supply. It is soft in nature and satisfactory in quality and quantity. All dwellings in the Borough are supplied directly with water.

The water supplied to Farnworth is filtered at four filter stations. Normally samples of both the untreated and filtered water are taken for full bacteriological examination each week and for full chemical analysis each month. Special examinations and analyses are made as required.

The following is a summary of the results of bacteriological examinations, chemical analyses, etc., supplied by Bolton Waterworks Department :—

No. of bacteriological examinations of the raw water ...	144
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Results : Generally filtration and treatment necessary.

No. of chemical analyses...	...	...	...	...	55
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RESULTS : Satisfactory.

Water going into supply, where treatment is installed :—

No of bacteriological examinations	...	...	...	144
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RESULTS : Water of excellent quality, *B. Coli* being absent in almost all cases in 100 mls.

No. of chemical analyses...	...	...	...	...	55
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RESULTS : Satisfactory.

No action was necessary in respect of any form of contamination.

No liability to plumbo-solvent action.

An additional 1546 yards of water main varying in diameter from 2" to 6" were laid in Farnworth during the year.

## DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

This is almost entirely on the combined system. There is one main sewage disposal plant at Hall Lane Sewage Works and a subsidiary plant at Lark Hill.

## CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

Accommodation at the end of 1949 :—

Number of privy middens ... ..	3
Number of closets attached to these middens ...	9
Number of pail closets ... ..	5
Number of dry ashpits (excluding middens) ...	Nil
Number of movable ashbins ... ..	8970
Number of trough closets ... ..	Nil
Number of waste water closets ... ..	229
Number of fresh water closets ... ..	9526
Number of houses on water carriage system ...	8690
Number of waste water closets converted to fresh water closets ... ..	15

## COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL OF HOUSE REFUSE.

Three covered motor vehicles carry out a combined collection of household refuse and salvage. The refuse is disposed of by controlled tipping on a site well away from all dwelling houses.

## SANITARY INSPECTIONS DURING 1949 (INCLUDING HOUSING).

Number of premises visited ... ..	1796
Number of visits :—	
Housing and nuisances ... ..	2251
Dairies ... ..	26
Farms... ..	36
Ice Cream Premises ... ..	76
Food preparing premises ... ..	75
Bakehouses ... ..	36
Butchers' Shops ... ..	43
Fish Fryers ... ..	15
Shops ... ..	186
Factories ... ..	81
Rat infestations ... ..	170
Disinfections ... ..	27
Infectious diseases ... ..	81
Food poisoning enquiries ... ..	56
Overcrowding ... ..	24
Public Baths... ..	14
Drainage work ... ..	181
W.W.C. conversions... ..	23
Smoke observations... ..	14
Disease of Animals Act ... ..	2
Offices... ..	1
Cinemas ... ..	5

Mortuary ... ..	9
Piggeries ... ..	6
Public Houses ... ..	5
Milk samples ... ..	37
Refuse Disposal ... ..	6
Schools ... ..	11
Disinfestations ... ..	59

Defects or nuisances :—

Number discovered 2029.      Number abated 1915

Number of notices served :—

Preliminary 500.      Statutory 176.

Legal proceedings were taken in 1 case of non-compliance with Statutory Notice. An abatement order was obtained.

#### SHOPS AND OFFICES.

	Inspections	Defects and Contraven- tions	Remedied
(a) Shops Act, 1934, relating to ventilation and temperature of shops and to sanitary conveniences ...	186	—	—
(b) Public Health Act, 1936, relating to conditions in offices, i.e., ventilation, sanitary conveniences, etc.	1	—	—

#### SMOKE ABATEMENT.

14 observations were taken during the year.

No action was necessary as a result of these observations.

#### FACTORIES ACT. 1937.

	No. of Inspections	Written Notices	Prosecu- tions
1. Factories with mechanical power ... ..	54	—	—
Factories without mechanical power ... ..	99	14	—
Other premises ... ..	3	2	—
2. No. of defects found ...	23	16	—

The 156 inspections carried out under the Factories Act, 1937, comprised visits to cotton mills, woodwork factory, engineering works, foundries, joiners' shops, bakehouses, etc.

Defects in the 23 instances were remedied forthwith by informal action.

## VERMIN INFESTATION.

Particulars of action taken during the year.

No. of houses disinfested :—

(a) By Hydrogen Cyanide (carried out by Contractor)

(1) Council houses	...	...	...	...	...	4
(2) Other houses	...	...	...	...	...	1

(b) Insecticides (D.D.T.)

(1) Council houses	...	...	...	...	...	7
(2) Other houses	...	...	...	...	...	13

The furniture and effects of three prospective tenants of Council houses were disinfested with hydrogen cyanide in the course of removal.

It is pleasing to record that there is a marked reduction in the amount of vermin infestation, particularly bed bugs, in houses in the town. This is undoubtedly due to the use of modern insecticides containing D.D.T. and Gammexane, and to the improving standards of domestic hygiene.

### PUBLIC BATHS.

The Public Baths are owned by the Corporation and are under the control of the Health Committee.

The baths consist of one swimming bath 75 ft. long and 30 ft. wide, 61 cubicles, 2 large dressing rooms and 2 store rooms, 4 foot baths, 2 females' and 3 males' slipper baths. The water is kept in a clean and safe condition by means of a modern filtration plant consisting of filter tank, pump, motor, superheater, air compressor and aeration chamber, syphon, glass feed and chemical tanks. After filtration the water is chlorinated.

## INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

(a) MILK SUPPLY.

There are 8 dairy farms in the district with approximately 210 cows. 3 of the farms are licensed for the production of "Accredited" milk. All were frequently inspected for sanitary defects and to ensure that the provisions of the Milk and Dairies Orders were complied with. 36 inspections were made up to the 1st October, 1949.

On October 1st under the Milk and Dairies Regulations 1949, the duty of supervising the production and handling of milk on the farms was transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. The Local Authority retains responsibility for enforcing those sections of the Milk and Dairies Regulations which apply to the handling and distribution of milk after it has left the farm, including the registration of milk distributors.

Most of the milk supply in Farnworth is pasteurised in a well equipped modern dairy which received careful supervision and frequent inspection. Again, under the Milk and Dairies Regulations, the duty of licensing and supervising the pasteurising plant at the dairy has passed from the local authority to the Lancashire County Council.

Under the provisions of the Milk and Dairies Regulations 1949, 139 persons were registered as milk distributors. 2 Dairy premises were registered.

Under the provisions of the Milk (Special Designations) (Pasteurised and Sterilised Milk) Regulations 1949, 134 persons were granted Dealers' Licences to sell by retail sterilised milk and 5 to sell by retail pasteurised milk. 5 persons were granted Dealers' Licences to sell Tuberculin Tested milk.

#### EXAMINATION OF MILK SUPPLIES.

37 samples of raw and pasteurised milk were examined during the year. 6 of these were found to be bacteriologically unsatisfactory. The producers were informed of the results and subsequent samples were satisfactory.

The tubercle bacillus was found in one sample of milk and the appropriate steps for the removal of the infected animal were taken.

#### (b) EXAMINATION OF ICE CREAM.

There are 7 manufacturers in the town, each having a separate room or building used exclusively for ice cream manufacture and equipped with suitable plant for the purpose.

76 inspections of these premises were made during the year.

24 samples of ice cream were sent for bacteriological examination. These were provisionally graded on the results of the methylene blue reduction test which was recommended by the Ministry of Health as a suitable test for checking the hygienic conditions of manufacture.

As a result of the grading of the samples, 10 samples were Grade 1, 7 were Grade 2, 3 were Grade 3, and 4 were Grade 4.

Steps were taken to improve the grading of the unsatisfactory producers. Co-operation between the trade and the Department was excellent.

The number of premises registered for the sale of ice cream at the end of 1949 was 32, the majority being for the sale of wrapped ice cream only.

## (c) MEAT AND OTHER FOODS.

All premises where food is stored or exposed for sale are inspected frequently, 245 such inspections being made during the year.

The following food was condemned and surrendered during the year :—

212	assorted tins
144	tins milk
4	tins meat
8	cwt. potatoes
5½	cwt. swedes
15	lbs. currants
12	lbs. honey
52	lbs. raisins
14	lbs. suet
28	lb. lard
420	lbs. flour
30	lbs. oats
166	lbs. barley
5	lb. soyaghetti
8	lbs. prunes
554	lbs. beef
2½	lbs. pork
4	lb. veal
9	lb. ham
90	lb. sausage
30	lb. tinned mussels
5	stone megrims
27	jars pickles
6	lb. chocolate
4	lb. cheese
12	coconuts

On the 9th November, 1949, members of the Health Sub-Committee, together with the Medical Officer of Health and the Senior Sanitary Inspector, met representatives of Food Traders and discussed with them the question of food hygiene. On behalf of the traders it was suggested that it would be better to rely on voluntary co-operation by the traders rather than on compulsion by means of bye-laws, but it was pointed out that the traders' co-operation would be necessary to achieve the standard set out by the model bye-laws, and that compulsion should only be necessary in cases where voluntary co-operation was not forthcoming. Some of the representatives also suggested that the public should be requested to co-operate with food retailers in keeping foodstuffs clean.

The Council had agreed to make Bye-laws on the lines of the Model Bye-laws of the Ministry of Food on the "handling,

wrapping and delivery of food and sale of food in the open air " and the Council's decision was communicated to the meeting.

(d) ADULTERATION OF FOOD.

The County Council is the Authority under the Sale of Food and Drugs Act, and samples are taken by the County Sanitary Officer in collaboration with the local Sanitary Officer.

Particulars of samples taken during the year :—

Milk	...	...	...	...	...	111
Other articles	...	...	...	...	...	39

All the dry goods samples were certified by the County Analyst to be genuine with the exception of the following :—

SAMPLE	RESULT OF ANALYSIS	ACTION TAKEN.
1 informal milk.	Deficient of 20% fat.	Farmer notified.
1 informal milk.	Deficient of 5% fat.	Farmer notified.
1 informal milk.	Deficient of 7.6% solids-not-fat. Freezing point indicated the presence of 5.5% of extraneous water.	Same Vendor.
1 informal milk.	Deficient of 5.3% solids-not-fat. Freezing point indicated the presence of 3.1% of extraneous water.	
		Formal samples obtained.

RODENT CONTROL.

During the year the work of rodent control was continued intensively, two rodent operatives being employed.

177 surface infestations were dealt with and in addition the sewer system of the town was systematically treated on two occasions with poisoned bait.

On the first treatment which was carried out in May, 346 manholes were baited ; 34 of them were found to be infested and in 27 cases poisoned bait was taken. This was followed by a further treatment commenced in November, when 883 manholes were baited. 54 were found to be infested and there were 49 poisoned bait takes.

Corporation refuse tips and sewage works are kept under constant observation.

During the summer, in collaboration with neighbouring authorities, the banks of the River Croal and its tributaries were surveyed for evidence of rat infestation. This was found to be less than expected.

Treatment of infestation was commenced on the 1st June, 1949, simultaneously with all other local authorities which have the rivers Irwell, Croal or Roch in their area. All holes found were treated with cyanide, and poisoned bait treatment using sausage rusk and zinc phosphide was used in addition. The process was repeated on July 25th when infestation was found to be virtually nil.

This was the most extensive treatment of a river system carried out in this country.

All rat infestations in the district are dealt with promptly, private dwellings being treated free of charge. Treatment of business premises is charged on a basis of men's time and materials used, the preliminary survey being carried out free of charge.

While sporadic surface infestations are dealt with speedily, it cannot be too strongly emphasised that it is the routine surveying and treatment of the area, particularly of the sewers and such possible centres of infestation as refuse tips and sewage works, that are the important features in keeping the level of rat population in the district to the absolute minimum.

## HOUSING.

Number of new houses erected during the year :—

(1) By the local authority	...	...	...	...	56
(2) By other local authorities	...	...	...	...	Nil
(3) By other bodies or persons...	...	...	...	...	Nil

1. Inspection of dwelling-houses during the year :—

(1) (a) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected formally or informally for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	...	...	...	...	491
(b) Number of inspections, formal or informal, made for the purpose	...	...	...	...	2234
(2) (a) Number of dwelling-houses (included under sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925 and 1932	...	...	...	...	46
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose...	...	...	...	...	310
(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	...	...	...	...	2





